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GVERNOR WINTHROP'S  
RETURN TO BOSTON.



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WINTHROP'S STATUE IN SCOLLAY SQUARE.

GOVERNOR WASHINGTON'S RETURN TO DORSET.

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AN INTERVIEW

WITH

A GREAT CHARACTER.

A Poem

READ AT A SOCIAL MEETING OF FIRST CHURCH, AND  
ALSO AT THE THURSDAY EVENING CLUB,  
MARCH 25, APRIL 20, 1882.

W. G. WASHINGTON WARREN

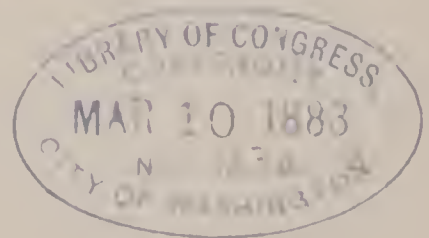
"Interviews are a modern species of literature, in which the author attempts to give a fancy sketch of the known or supposed opinions of the party interviewed."

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TO  
ROBERT CHARLES WINTHROP,

THE DISTINGUISHED DESCENDANT OF

GOVERNOR JOHN WINTHROP,

A GENTLEMAN AND A SCHOLAR, A STATESMAN AND AN ORATOR,  
IN WHOM THE VIRTUES OF HIS ILLUSTRIOUS ANCESTOR  
ARE HAPPILY BLENDED,

*This Little Book,*

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF HIGH ESTEEM,  
IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.





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GOVERNOR WINTHROP'S RETURN  
TO BOSTON.



## Governor Winthrop's Return to Boston.

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ON the seventeenth day of September, A.D. 1880, the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the town of Boston, the event was commemorated, among other ways, by the inauguration of the statue of John Winthrop, in Scollay Square. He is represented by the renowned sculptor in the garb of a gentleman of his day, holding in his hand the royal charter of the Massachusetts Colony, which he brought over with him.

His serene countenance falls like a benediction upon this city of ours, which shows a wonderful and prosperous growth. He may be said to be the founder of the First Church of Boston, of the City itself, and of this Christian Commonwealth, — a threefold distinction. To have been the founder of a single one of these would have insured his immortal fame.



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He was also the author of the covenant of the First Church, which was gathered in Charlestown, Aug. 27, 1630, and which soon after removed to the Boston side of Charles River. The covenant is in these words: —

“ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to His holy and divine ordinance, —

“ We, whose names are hereunder written, being by His most wise and good providence brought together into this part of America, in the Bay of Massachusetts, and desirous to unite ourselves into one congregation or church, under the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head, in such sort as becometh all those whom He hath redeemed and sanctified to Himself, do hereby solemnly and religiously (as in His most holy presence) promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the Gospel and in all sincere conformity to His holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect, each to other, so near as God shall give us grace.”

Probably there are very few, if any, original documents in America of so ancient a date which have been preserved, and which are still in force, as this identical covenant, which has been signed and kept by hundreds in each generation for nearly three



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centuries. Far superior to the Andover creed, or to any other creed of seminary, council, or church, it has ever been a bond of union, and not a bone of contention. Aptly phrased and including all the essential conditions of a vital church organization, it will stand for centuries to come, and will outlast all creeds of human invention, ever promoting beneficence and charity.

This poem represents the spirit of Governor Winthrop returning to the city and the capital of the Christian Commonwealth he had founded, and taking possession of the bodily form which the artist has reproduced of him, clothed in his own antique costume. He surveys the extended limits of Boston, including Charlestown, with Bunker Hill Monument, and four other townships with hundreds of church steeples pointing to the sky. He misses from the old site on Cornhill the single house of worship where Wilson and Cotton preached, and where he was wont to expound; but soon he descries from afar, in his mind's eye, standing where, in his time, the waves of the sea were surging, the beautiful church edifice and the elegant chapel where five hundred Sunday-scholars are weekly taught. He dwells with supreme satisfaction upon the good deeds done by the church he established, and predicts for it a still more prosperous future and a





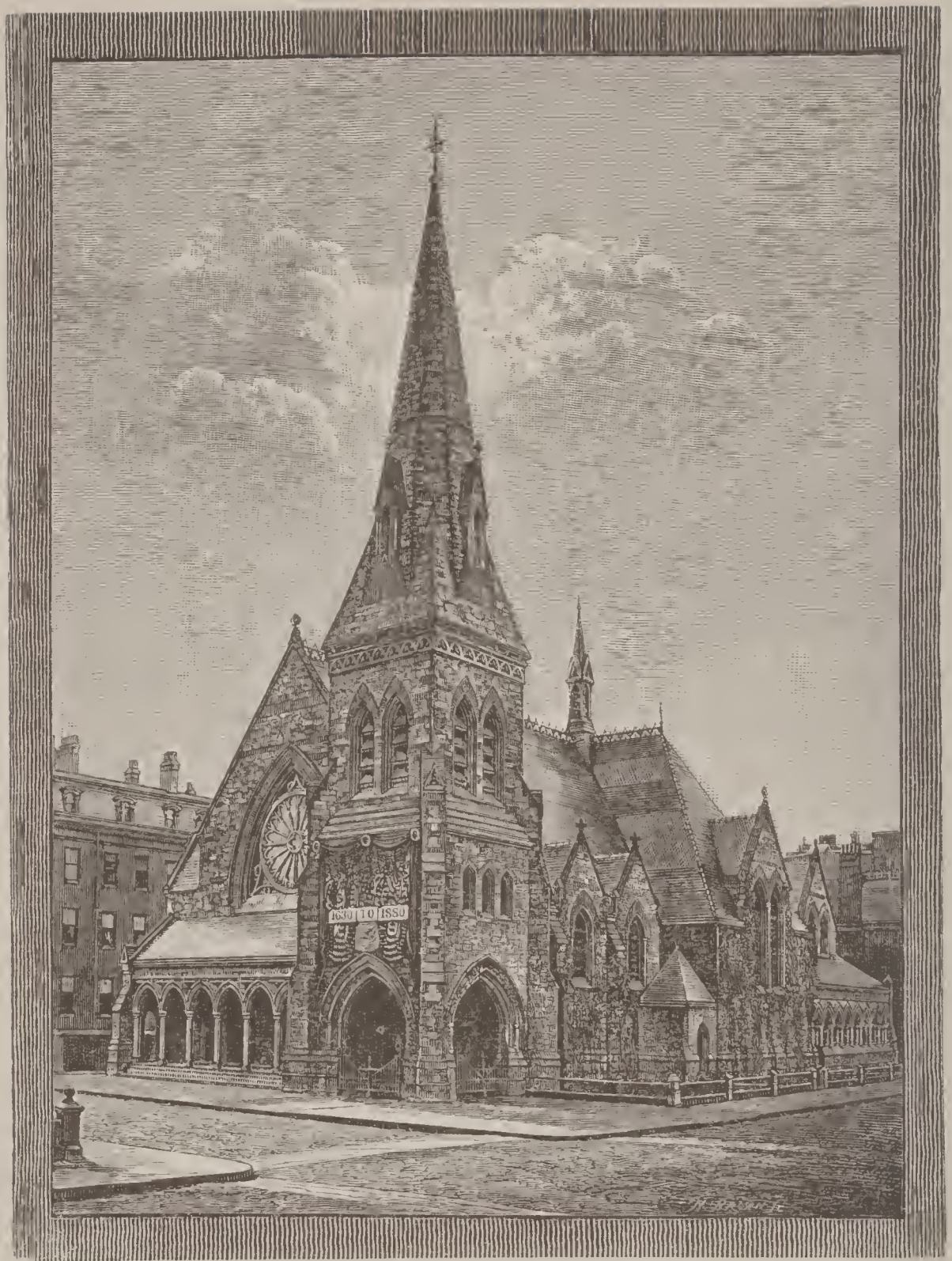
greater spiritual growth. He recognizes only two things which existed in his day, and have remained unchanged, — the church covenant he wrote, as it were, by inspiration, or at least by a wise forecast of future needs, and the Communion cup he gave, which has singularly escaped the hazards of fire and the chances of time, and which has been, ever since, constantly used in the holy commemorative service.

Upon these almost universal changes he makes some appropriate reflections. To “sit in the stocks” was a punishment commonly imposed in his time for various offences. Richard Frothingham, in his “History of Charlestown,” gives a view of the stocks that were set in the market-place with this mode of punishment applied. The view is here reproduced. “It was









FIRST CHURCH IN BOSTON.

CORNER OF BERKELEY AND MARLBOROUGH STREETS.



much used," says Frothingham, "and several times repaired. A sentence by the selectmen for 'drinking to excess,' shows that one hour's sitting in the stocks could be compromised by paying 3s. 4d. money." Winthrop, of course, would be struck with the different use of the word now so frequently spoken. From the fact that all investments of his day are swept out of existence, he predicts that the properties now held as most secure and reliable will in as long a time disappear. He illustrates the superiority of man, in his own best estate, to all worldly possessions.

His allusion to the vision of Rev. John Wilson, the first minister of the church, recalls the following passage in his diary as quoted by Hon. Robert C. Winthrop in his "Life and Letters of John Winthrop," vol. 2, page 108.

"The pastor of Boston, Mr. Wilson, a very sincere, holy man, . . . told the governour that, before he was resolved to come into this country, he dreamed he was here, and that he saw a church arise out of the earth, which grew up and became a marvellous goodly church."

The present church edifice well answers this description ; built with exquisite taste after a most appropriate design, and





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bearing the palm of all the costly churches in the new part of Boston for fitness, beauty, and permanency.

The Thursday Lecture, which was the special clerical and social occasion of his time, he finds abolished ; and he observes that the Thursday Evening Club is now a characteristic feature of Boston. This was formed for social, scientific, and literary objects. Among its founders and early members were Edward Everett, a member of First Church, and Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, the distinguished descendant and representative of the Winthrop family. The one referred to in this interview as the then leader of the Club was its late President, William B. Rogers. He was a man of superior scientific attainments, with a power of apt expression and a felicity and fluency of utterance indeed remarkable. By his efforts and influence the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was established, — a lasting monument of his zeal for technical science, the most needed factor in popular education. In making an address to the Institute at its Commencement exercises, May 30, 1882, he was struck with death ; he left the very place of his heart's and life's devotion for the spirit land of Winthrop. His predecessors in the office of President of the Club were John C. Warren, the nephew of General Joseph Warren, Edward Everett, J. Mason Warren, and Bishop



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Manton Eastburn. The historic mantle of the office has now been cast on Colonel Theodore Lyman, upon whose well-stored and lofty head honors have fallen thick, but no faster than merited.

Josiah Quincy the elder, the second on the roll of Boston's distinguished Mayors, declared that the City might well adopt Winthrop as its patron saint. His was an ideal, saintly life, and his character, in a sense, supernatural. He bore success and defeat in a political election with like equanimity, a trait that, as it were, by a law of heredity marks with special honor his living representative. Whether in office or out, and possessing large estates or, one after another, deprived of them, he kept his mind active and his brain industriously working for the development of a higher social life under Christian culture in a virgin land, by his leadership, under the Providence he devoutly acknowledged, to be fitted and fashioned for a new and powerful country, of which Boston was to be a memorable city.

Nor could he fail to remark upon the location of the statue set up in his honor in Scollay Square, rather than on Boston Common, which he had laid out and secured to posterity. The City



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Square in Charlestown, where he first unrolled the old charter of the Colony before the new government at its first meeting here, would have been a better site for it than the one selected.

Difficult it is, indeed, to set down in worthy lines the remembrance of the interview herein depicted. Of course, it has been faintly and inadequately done. Let us hope, however, that, should Winthrop's spirit, two or three centuries hence, visit again the last and most eventful scenes of his earthly life, he will find Boston, though changed anew, yet vastly improved, keeping pace with all developments for the good of an ever advancing race, and second to none in the Commonwealth or Nation in true excellence and progress.



AN INTERVIEW  
WITH  
A GREAT CHARACTER.

A Poem.





## P O E M.

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HERE was a quiet hour in Scollay  
Square ;

The cars and teams were blocked from  
getting there ;

No longer shone the famed electric light, —

It flickered out and left the darkest night.

I seemed to feel a shock upon my arm,

And hear the statue speak : “ I ’ll do no harm, —

An elder of First Church I think you are ;

I have a message for you ; come, prepare.”



---

“Winthrop!” cried I, “my venerable sire!  
Do you reanimate your rich attire?  
Most glad am I to have this interview;  
Pray, tell me all you wish, things old and new.”

“My friend,” said he, “no ven’rable am I,  
For mortals grow no older when they die;  
E’er since my earthly race I long have run,  
My age has numbered only sixty-one.  
Years are not counted on the heavenly shore,  
For in eternal life time is no more.  
The children sweet, the lovely bride forsooth,  
Transferred, preserve the freshness of their youth.  
Those who departed later are not found  
Far to transcend them in their endless round.  
More of the spirits’ life I may not tell;  
Enough to say that with them all is well;







PORTRAIT OF REV. JOHN WILSON.

God's universe has boundless worlds to show;  
His works will take eternity to know.

“ But I would speak of your millennial time  
Whose fame has gone through yon celestial clime.  
Almost one seventh of the years our Lord  
Has named for Him, First Church has preached  
His word.

Its simple cov'nant ever served its need;  
It learned to live without a cumbrous creed.  
Its 'goodly church,' fast built where flowed the tide,  
Fulfils the vision Wilson saw with pride.  
Its charming chapel opens wide the door  
To the bright children of the suffering poor.  
Ah! blest are they who use for them their might!  
Angels will bear them on their upward flight;









THE WINTHROP CUP.

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And, in return, the grateful youth will come,  
With prosperous hands, to deck their Christian  
home.

The seed, wide-spread, will take its deepest root,  
And, watered oft, will yield its tenfold fruit.  
Erelong those hallowed walls will scarce contain  
Those who shall flock to learn the precepts plain.  
More week-day services will be required,  
To hear the word by holy men inspired ;  
And long shall those enduring arches ring  
With pulpit tones, and songs the choir will sing.

“ The cup I gave, and which you pass around,  
The sole familiar thing about this ground,  
Will prove a token true from age to age, —  
May its partakers gild the sacred page !



---

“ Oft as my after-knowledge takes wide range,  
I note how wonderful the constant change :  
No coin we used is current here to-day ;  
The bills we passed you would not take for pay.  
Our money funds required no ‘ safety ’ locks,  
And differs much what we and you call ‘ stocks ; ’  
Men often find yours quite a dangerous game,  
And get their foot stuck in them just the same.

“ The Thursday Lecture yields no more its grace ;  
Your Thursday Evening Club now takes its place.  
The buildings strong we built have ceased to be.  
Lands now most valued then were in the sea.  
And so, few centuries hence, ’t will be again :  
What now is property will sink like rain ;



Your mills, railroads, and bonds will be out-played ;  
Then, too, your fruitful Calumet may fade.  
Amass as much as one can call his own,  
By right use only can its good be shown ;  
Pile worldly goods in a superfluous whole,  
They are not worth e'en one immortal soul.

“ 'T was not my lot to have large sums in store,  
My wealth was gone ere mortal life was o'er ;  
But Faith and Liberty I most did prize, —  
On those twin rocks I bade a nation rise.  
There was another John, you understand ;  
He founded Learning's halls in this new land ;  
Not Vanderbilt, nor any moneyed name  
Will e'er outshine John Harvard's brilliant fame.





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Learn this: strive not for wealth that will not last,  
But let your treasures be in heaven cast;  
These are alone the real things to crave.  
While that will mould, like bodies in the grave,  
Material forms to meet decay are sure;  
The mind and spirit only will endure.  
Hope's blissful visions, with its longings strong,  
The will's high purpose, freed from thought of  
    wrong,  
Fond memory of good deeds that here were done,  
Of sinners from their evil courses won,  
The love and knowledge of the God Supreme,  
Of Christ who came the fallen to redeem, —  
These are, indeed, the good, substantial things  
To which the soul for endless ages clings.



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“ Could I have marked where should this statue  
stand,

I would have placed it on that Common land,  
Of past and coming times the great delight, —  
With First Church spire and Capitol in sight ;  
My figure there should front the setting sun ;  
That, in review of any good I 've done  
During the last score years I passed on earth,  
Posterity may better know my worth.

“ I love the grand First Church, I love the State.  
I planted both. Their growth, through God, is  
great,

And both will flourish ever, while the sun  
His circuit round this globe shall seem to run.



---

May every good Saint Botolph's town betide,  
And Thursday Club, led by the wisest Guide."

Of what he said, this is, condensed, the sum.  
Then flashed the light; on came the busy hum;  
Then Winthrop's spirit soared up to the stars;  
Mute stood his statue 'mid the noisy cars.

















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